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**Moshugi, Kgomotso**

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# CREATING NEW, PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN OUTCOMES: JOY BY AND BY REMADE

KGOMOTSO MOSHUGI

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How can new knowledge be produced through processes of musical arrangement that have not traditionally been canonised? Through analysis of the versions of the hymn *Joy By and By*, which local arrangers have created since the 1980s, the process of re-imagination and defamiliarisation will be explained.

## Defamiliarisation, decolonialism, and rejecting Hegel

Presenting new, previously unknown musical outcomes, is based on altering musical elements with new ideas in a manner that defamiliarises a known piece of music. Hence, I work with the notion that understanding and observing artistic works as embodiments and products of thinking, and a form of "knowing" through creative means, is essential for research in the arts, through the arts, for the arts, or related to the arts, more generally.[1]

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, using a systems model of creativity, offers a framework that recognises the making of creative works as a process depended on, and able to alter, current practice, while producing new knowledge in any given cultural domain.[2] In my doctoral study, of which this paper is an extract, I examine how hymnal and hymn practice developed through missionisation efforts when the Seventh-day Adventist church established itself in South Africa. The hymn *Joy By and By*, composed by Franklin Edson Belden in 1886, became part of a local hymnbook compilation that was translated into vernacular languages. Since the mid-1980s, beyond its use in congregational singing, this hymn has been the object of re-imagination and defamiliarisation by arrangers who have applied to it their creativity, yielding new versions. In my research, I analyse this hymn from the hymnbook and audio recordings, supplemented by an interview with Boyce Seoketsa, who arranged a popular version. I also consider my own arrangement of the same hymn through a reflexive process. Observing this work in its original form, I trace the intellectual value and processes it undergoes as it assumes new forms and variations, in comparative perspective, demonstrating how new knowledge can be produced through processes of musical arranging that have not traditionally been canonised. Through this paper, I also reflect on and challenge the scholarship of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, which is refuted by most other African scholars, regarding how it undermines the intellectual and creative capacity of Africans.

In Omotade Adegbindin's work, it is apparent that Hegel subjectively crafted (and presented as objective) a "cultural framework" that recognises four historical worlds: Oriental, Greek, Roman, and German.[3] Here, Hegel offers no consideration for Africans and is challenged for his endeavours to erase Africa from "universal history," and for justifying slavery and colonisation of blacks. The majority of black scholars do not accept Hegel on the basis that his assertions are totally misinformed and perpetuate a stereotypical view of blacks and Africa, which has historically resulted in layers of human rights violations and a devaluing of African life and thought. Such premises held by Hegel have framed historic and contented misconceptions. This paper is aligned to scholarship that denounces Hegelian views of Africa. Part of the major challenge of African scholars has been to redress the misrepresentation of Africans in history and scholarship by providing empirical evidence and theorisation that speaks to the value and realities of Africans. The impact of Hegelian thought has been problematic on multiple levels of African life, purloining the correct understanding and observational canons suitable for the rest of the world to understand the value of African intellectuality, related aesthetics, and their production merits.

Colonialism, as an act of establishing systems to exert control and dominance of one over another,[4] has assumed various shapes and forms in the process of permeating our African communities and practices over time. As a result of recent outcries in academia, and other areas of society, to "decolonise" is underscored by growing resistance to various systems that have continued to undermine the privileges of one, while unfairly privileging another, group or set of ideals.[5] Although I am not entirely opposed to the decoloniality rhetoric, in positioning my attempts through this study,

part of my proposition also entails thinking of colonisation not only in terms of its hegemony. I consider the possibility of coloniality and its intersection with the indigenous in producing new possible outcomes, that are decolonial in nature: a form of response to coloniality. Critical socio-cultural historic contributions through the relocation of Euro-American hymns in South Africa have not previously been recognised for their nuanced transformational value. For instance, Kofi Agawu argues that tonality, through Christian hymns, has manifested as a colonial force imposing itself on local music(s).[6] While this argument is sustainable in some respect, I take a divergent view to value, instead, the resultant longstanding decolonial efforts that have been ongoing in the re-imagination or de-familiarisation of hymns since missionary times, and the originality and creativity in the transcultural local posture they have assumed. I look at this response to coloniality.

Other scholars have refuted Hegelian assertions, advancing with such concepts, for example, by Kwasi Wiredu,[7] which relate to cultural universals and cultural particulars, offering an opportunity to observe the creativity of Africans within their cultural settings in ways that recognise their humanness within the spectrum of other humans and cultures. This concept implies that there are practices or knowledge forms that are general to all cultures, while there are those that are specific to given groups. Therefore, the assertions that Africans are unable to create are based on ill-informed views that classify Africans as less than human. Wiredu suggests that the creation of culture is a function of creativity, one that resides in all humans.[8] Lewis Gordon attends intentionally to the idea of black aesthetics for the appreciation or understanding of black value.[9] This is an effort towards redressing past neglect of adequate treatment in scholarship that Gordon argues as limited theorisation appropriate for aesthetics that relate to settings of black people. This is an exercise in the domain of decoloniality—the redressing of colonial injustices. In this study, "blacks" refers to those groups of people who had the least privileges in society and no connection with Euro-American Christianity prior to the arrival of missionaries.

### *Joy By and By—Ekupheleni Sothokoza*

Belden was born in Battle Creek, Michigan in 1858. He began writing music in his late teenage years after moving to California with his family. For health reasons, he later moved to Colorado. He returned to Battle Creek with his wife in the early 1880s and there became involved in publishing activities of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Belden wrote many hymn texts and tunes, gospel songs, and related texts in the early years of the Adventist Church. He was able to write both music and poetry rapidly together, which enabled him to write a song to fit a sermon while it was still being delivered. He compiled and edited a hymnal *Christ in Song*, which was published in 1908 by Review and Herald (the publishing wing of the Adventist Church). Although sold to members of the church and used extensively in the services, it was Belden's personal enterprise and never an official hymnbook of the church. However, it became a more popular collection than its official counterpart, *Hymns and Tunes*.[10] Belden died on 2 December 1945 in Battle Creek, Michigan.[11]

Through the establishment of Adventism in South Africa, the national governing body of the church, the Southern African Union Conference (SAUC), set up a committee for translating a Zulu hymnal. Although the committee comprised two Europeans and one African, the latter, J. Kuboni, a native minister of the church, translated the hymns under the supervision of white pastors, as was the norm in those days. Kuboni was a former teacher proficient in English and Zulu. At the time of translation, the

worldwide General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC) church had already adopted a new hymnal, the *Church Hymnal*,[12] in 1941 after retiring *Hymns and Tunes*. The title of the Zulu hymnbook was translated from *Christ in Song* to *uKrestu eNgomeni*. By 1960, the Zulu hymnal was formally in circulation and used in congregational singing. It contained three hundred songs taken from both Belden's *Christ in Song* and the *Church Hymnal*.[13]

*Joy By and By*, translated as *Ekupheleni Sothokoza*, hymn number 48 in *uKrestu eShlabelelweni* became one of the favourites in the church. Seoketsa, one of the influential musical arrangers among local black Adventists, had a tendency to use secular melodies with sacred lyrics. On one occasion, while listening to the radio, he heard a catchy, appealing melody, which he later learnt was by Reuben Tholakele Caluza, a musical icon and teacher who was educated in America in the 1930s and 50s. Seoketsa took the first section of this song, *iNgoduso*, and adapted it to the verse of the hymn. He composed a new melody for the chorus and wrote a totally new lyric for one of the verses in his new arrangement. Seoketsa was part of a quartet at Vintage at Bethel College, a mission school in the Eastern Cape, which first sang this arrangement. However, it was the SDASA chorale (a male group) that popularised it, nationally, through their performances and an album recording. In 1998, No Limits, an Adventist mixed group (male and female voices) released an album that contained a new version of this hymn, and they have since created additional new versions.

Belden did not speak the Zulu language, nor did Kuboni ever meet him. However, Kuboni engaged with the former's work and applied his mind to it, re-contextualising it in South Africa, in a manner previously unknown. Further, Seoketsa never engaged directly with the ideas of Belden; instead, his engagement was with the ideas of Belden as presented in the work of Kuboni. Finally, Caluza did not meet Seoketsa in person but his ideas, as expressed in the melody of *iNgoduso*, filtered through to the composer. Caluza had no conception of the possibility that Seoketsa realised this arrangement through his initial melody. Seoketsa applied himself to the hymn and framed it into an expression previously unknown, building on and integrating his new ideas with previously existing ideas, which were also once unknown. The development of this hymn is not only due to those who have creatively modified and adapted it. Review and Herald published the hymnbook and made it accessible; missionaries travelled and carried it into Africa; and the SAUC voted on, and facilitated, its translation by co-opting Kuboni into the process. When Seoketsa had arranged it, the SDASA chorale group of singers were willing to perform it, and they became the carriers of the musical ideas. The local leadership of the church permitted the performance of an altered version of the hymn, and the congregation, as an audience, were accepting and willing to listen to it. When it was recorded, the SDASA chorale was able to circulate their influence through the arrangement, the technology enabling the recording became the medium through which their arrangement became known and, therefore, part of the South African Adventist devotional and cultural experience.

In the version I have created, I build on my regular engagement with the hymn in congregational settings and the arrangement of Seoketsa. His version used the words of the second verse as a section precedes the chorus from the verses. I drew on this; I created an introduction for the song and used the second verse as a section that leads to the chorus. Seoketsa extended the verses by repeating the melody he extracted from Caluza's *iNgoduso*. However, I wrote a new melody for the entire hymn and variated it for the introduction, verse, section leading to the chorus, and the chorus. My concept of the entire arrangement was based on the lyrics of the hymn. Given that "joy" is a feeling of pleasure and happiness, I intended to create music

that compliments these sentiments, such that if one removed the lyrics and listened only to the music, the feeling suggested by the words would continue to permeate.

| English | Zulu translation | Zulu interpretation | English translation |
|---|---|---|---|
| O there'll be joy when the work is done,<br><br>Joy when the reapers gather home,<br><br>Bringing the sheaves at set of sun<br><br>To the New Jerusalem.<br><br>Joy, joy, joy, there'll be joy by and by,<br><br>Joy, joy, joy, where the joys never die;<br><br>Joy, joy, joy, for the day draweth nigh,<br><br>When the workers gather home. | Kuyakuba nentokozo uma umsebenzi usuphelile,<br><br>Injabulo uma abathungi be hlangana ekhaya,<br><br>Baletha izithungu ekushoneni kwelanga,<br><br>Kulo elisha iJerusalema.<br><br>Intokozo, intokozo,<br>Intokozo, ku yoba nentokozo ekuhambeni kweskhathi,<br><br>Intokozo, intokozo, Intokozo, lapho inyntokozo zingafi,<br><br>Intokozo, intokozo, Intokozo, ngoba usku lusondela eduzane,<br><br>uMaizisebenzi sihlangana ekhaya. | Ekupheleni sothokoza<br><br>Sesibuthana ekhaya<br><br>Sileth' izithungu zethu<br><br>Ejerusalementsha<br><br>Thokoza, thokoza.<br>Thokoza, thokoza<br><br>Kungel'ukuthokoza<br><br>Ngobu'suku luyeza | At the end we will rejoice<br><br>When we gather home<br><br>When we bring our sheaves<br><br>In Jerusalem that is new<br><br>Rejoice, rejoice<br><br>Rejoice, rejoice<br><br>It will never end, to rejoice<br><br>Because the day is coming |

Kgomotso is a musical arranger and Creative Work PhD candidate in the Wits School of Arts; kmoshugi@gmail.com

## Notes

1 Crispin, 'Artistic Research and Music Scholarship'.

2 Csikszentmihalyi, 'Implications of a Systems Perspective for the Study of Creativity'.

3 Adegbindin, 'Critical Notes on Hegel's Treatment of Africa'.

4 Kohn and Reddy, 'Colonialism'.

5 Gordon, 'Black Aesthetics, Black Value'.

6 Agawu, 'Tonality as a Colonizing Force in African Music'.

7 Wiredu, 'Can Philosophy Be Intercultural?'

8 Wiredu, 'Can Philosophy Be Intercultural?'

9 Gordon, 'Thinking through Some Themes of Race and More'.

10 General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, *The Seventh-Day Adventist Hymn and Tune Book for Use in Divine Worship*.

11 Belden, *Christ in Song*, preface.

12 General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists, *The Church Hymnal*.

13 Southern African Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists archives and minutes between the 1930s and 1970s.

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